

**Idaho Fish and Game Commission  
Quarterly Meeting  
July 6-8, 2005**

**July 6, 2005**

The meeting was called to order at 3:35 p.m. Commissioners Gibbs, Wheeler, Watts, Wright, and Power, were present. Commissioners Alex Irby and Nancy Hadley were absent.

Chairman Gibbs welcomed the public and indicated that the workshop would continue on Friday if necessary. Chairman Gibbs reported that Commissioner Hadley has agreed to serve the Panhandle Region until a new commissioner is appointed by the Governor.

**Workshop – Landowner Appreciation Program**

Brad Compton, Big Game Manager, presented an overview of landowner programs in the 11 western states (Appendix 38, Exhibit 65). Programs were developed to address landowner/sportsmen relations, private and public land access, wildlife issues, and habitat issues.

Landowner programs can be recognition based or incentive based. Idaho's program is a mixture of the two. It was originally developed to recognize landowners for supporting wildlife and allowing reasonable access. The state does not have a current mission statement. The Department's draft of a new mission statement is: "To recognize Idaho's private landowners for supporting wildlife, maintaining wildlife habitat, and contributing to Idaho's hunting heritage."

Commissioner Wright introduced Steve Elam, landowner/sportsmen coordinator from the Magic Valley Region. The Region has the largest number of acres in Access Yes! and the largest number of LAP permits. Steve Elam detailed the concerns they are hearing:

1. Large landowners are treated the same as small landowners
2. Small landowners (less than 640 acres) cannot participate in the program.
3. Some units are oversubscribed.
4. Sportsmen feel landowners get additional tags and they get nothing. They are concerned about sale of LAP tag or sale of access.

Mr. Elam presented ideas on how to address the concerns. An additional component to Access Yes! would allow people to buy into Access Yes! for compensation in tags in exchange for access. A sportsmen review committee for Access Yes! would review bids. This would not increase the cost of funding Access Yes! and provides a different avenue to reward landowners. It would also allow landowners who could provide fishing or waterfowl access an opportunity to bid for big game tags.

The concept would leave LAP at 10% across the board and use the additional 15% for Access Yes! In Unit 45 (Wood River Valley) there is a different type of landowner coming in and buying large acreages. They are not incentivized with monetary compensation. Using tags is a way to compensate them. Mr. Elam recommended implementing a pilot project in Unit 45 and would like to provide some options for that project to the Commissioners.

Legislation would be necessary to allow sale of the tags, and asking for permission to sell tags will be very unpopular with sportsmen. Commissioner Wheeler stated that the program needs some continuity. Commissioner Wright commented that landowners are currently selling trespass rights and then transferring the tags, which is the same as selling the tags. Commissioner Power commented that the two programs need to be complementary. He is not bothered by landowners selling tags as long as it provides access for Idaho sportsmen. The selling point is the additional access. Commissioner Watts stated that he is not convinced that the concept of selling tags would be a public perception problem as long as sportsmen get access.

Chairman Gibbs provided information on the Hunting Lease Network, a franchise that is selling access for a certain period of time through a bidding process. The Network has all of Simplot's holdings in Idaho and is looking at eastern Washington and western Montana. They are actively trying to sign up landowners. If the Department does not act, someone else will, and there is a need to come up with something that gains access for sportsmen. The Chair will invite the Simplot representatives to come to the August meeting. He has encouraged them to contact Carl Rey and Dr. Marlor.

Commissioner Wheeler commented that controlled hunts is where the Department can blunt the influence of organizations like the Lease Network.

The Director commented that the dilemma is that selling tags really sticks in people's throats. The problem is that currently the landowner is selling a tag to hunt the whole unit outside of his private land. That takes away from other sportsmen.

The workshop ended at 5:00 p.m.

### **Public Meeting**

Chairman Gibbs called the meeting to order at 7:10 p.m. The Chairman introduced Commissioners Wright, Power, Watts, and Wheeler. Commissioners Irby and Hadley were absent. The Chairman welcomed the public, and the Director introduced staff. Jim Unsworth, Chief, Bureau of Wildlife, provided an overview of the meeting agenda items including release of bighorn sheep tags for auction and drawing, direction on the expenditure of animal damage control funds, and information on migratory waterfowl seasons and structure.

Doug Schleis representing Idaho Walleye Unlimited and Idaho Waterfowl spoke regarding walleye and perch limits. The Walleye Unlimited group has done significant habitat work for better walleye and other species at Salmon Falls Reservoir and Oakley Reservoir. They feel they have improved the fishery quite a bit. Walleye have started to come back, but due to overstocking or trout in 2003 and 2004 the predator base is holding numbers down. They would like to see a perch limit of 20 and the walleye limit reduced from 6 to 4. The group has talked to Region 4, who is not convinced these changes are biologically sound. Mr. Schleis also spoke on waterfowl. Idaho Waterfowl Association is a new group concerned about the resource. They would like a formal way to provide input on season limits and length. Chairman Gibbs mentioned that the Commission Meeting on August 29 and 30 will include setting waterfowl seasons. A public meeting is scheduled on Monday night, August 29.

Herby Meyr from Mountain Home commented on poor fishing in Harriman State Park on the stretch of river below Island Park. People come from all over the country to fish the Henry's Fork, and there is a big economic impact to businesses in Island Park. He became Chairman of the Board of the Henry's Fork Foundation to provide access and improve the fishery. Work has been done, but fishing is not meeting management goals. There are ideas on what to do, and Mr. Myer recommended a roundtable brainstorming session with headquarters staff and the region to see what action could be taken. He also supports the release of the bighorn sheep tags as he is on the board of FNAWS. Commissioner Wheeler asked Mr. Meyr about changes in vegetation on the Henry's Fork. Mr. Meyr commented that there are areas where the river has been dewatered and there is not much vegetation. Swans also had an impact in some areas. Chair Gibbs asked about involvement from The Nature Conservancy (TNC). TNC is involved in Henry's Lake above Island Park Reservoir. TNC and the Henry's Fork Foundation have worked on access around Ashton which has been productive.

Joe Harper, deputy ranger at the Sawtooth National Recreation Area, commended the work that Gary Gadwa does in the region and the assistance he provides to the SNRA. Mr. Harper has worked with numerous states and has not seen this cooperative spirit between the Forest Service and Fish and Game. Gary assists employees with snowmobile training and works on important issues with the SNRA such as noxious weeds and illegal ATV use.

Nate Helm, Executive Director of Sportsmen for Fish and Wildlife (SFW) also commended Gary Gadwa's work in the region. SFW has been working with the BLM to identify projects on 12 million acres of land for funding for 2007. BLM will pick those that have the most value primarily for huntable game. SFW wants to work with the Department to prioritize those projects. SFW provided comment on the travel plan for the forests and supported the Department's recommendations. SFW would like to be included earlier in the process. The group is concerned about aggressive ATV use in North Idaho. They are pleased to hear the Commission dealing with the LAP program and shares in a desire to build relationships between landowners and sportsmen. The group sent a letter to the Department with their broad opinion on the issue and would like to work with the Commission and the Advisory Committee to recognize outstanding landowner efforts. Mr. Helm attended a listening session with Senator Crapo's staff, which included a discussion of access. SFW supports the idea of exchanging tags for public access. They would like any incentive to include improved habitat. They recognize that landowners are critical and should be provided incentives, but opportunity for sportsmen should be protected.

Gary Kimble from the Challis Chamber of Commerce commented on the lack of a fishery on the upper Salmon. He stated that the number of fish returning to the hatcheries is far above projections. Forecasts were gloomy, but as of July 3 the Pahsimeroi hatchery was on track to have the 3<sup>rd</sup> largest return in history. As of today, they have every female brood stock they need to maintain their numbers. The region started last year to work on getting permits for a season on the upper Salmon this summer. However, they have now been told that there will not be a season. The public is feeling betrayed and lied to by the Department and by NOAA. The region needs the economic boost from a fishery. Sharon Kiefer indicated the Department is looking at the numbers, and assessing the incidental take relative to the permit. NOAA has indicated that because of the incidental take numbers they are reconsidering the permit and have had second thoughts for legal reasons. The Department will be talking about alternative fishery sites in the Challis area to give sportsmen an opportunity this year. NOAA just issued a 4D rule which eliminates incidental vs. direct take and puts it all in the same category; however, the 4D rule will not help this year.

Jay Neider from Stanley spoke to the Commission about his experience with elk depredation. He also commended Gary Gadwa. He has had elk depredation problems on his property, but because he has only 340 acres, he does not qualify for depredation payments or tags. He feels he should have been compensated for depredation. Mr. Neider also asked the Commission to look at the LAP program and consider smaller landowners. He also commented that wolves are a problem, and he would like the Commission to act as soon as possible to institute a hunting season on wolves to control them. Mr. Neider commented that there would be a big benefit to a salmon season in the region. He also would like to see the Department regularly stock mountain lakes. Mr. Neider commented on the lack of pheasants around his farm south of Nampa, and he feels something should be done. He suggested paying farmers to plant a crop and leave it for cover. He understands the habitat has disappeared, but the Department needs to create the habitat.

Commissioner Watts asked about whether the decision on a fishery in the upper Salmon was ultimately a state or federal decision. Sharon Kiefer clarified that it is ultimately a federal decision as all the fish are listed. The ESA does not have a regulatory pathway for direct take without a 4D rule.

Chairman Gibbs thanked the attendees for their input. The meeting adjourned at 8:33 p.m.

## **July 7, 2005**

### **MISCELLANEOUS**

#### **Opening Comments**

Chairman Gibbs called the meeting to order at 8:20 a.m.

#### **Agenda Changes**

The Fisheries Program Update was added to 8:00 a.m. Friday morning. Commissioners will go out at 9:00 a.m. Friday morning to unload fish from the trap on the river. Item #15 will be presented by Steve Nadeau instead of Steve Huffaker. The Chair added Item #22, and action on the Director's Salary Adjustment.

### **Review of Public Comment**

Scoping for fishing regulation changes will be discussed as Item 14 and will address some of the issues with walleye. Commissioner Wheeler asked about the swan population and if that was having an impact on fishing on the Henry's Fork. The Director explained that the Department has done a lot of work and follow-up to assess what factors are controlling the recruitment of fish on the Henry's Fork. Sedimentation is not the limiting factor. The flow is the limiting factor. Almost all of the natural production is coming out of box canyon. Natural production is variable, and we are in the low part of the cycle. The question is whether to move away from a wild population and start stocking hatchery fish, which will be highly controversial. The Fisheries Bureau six-year plan will address this. Staff will do a status review on the Henry's Fork and put together a workshop to discuss the problem. Commissioner Watts asked whether the Commission should address the walleye issue for this season.

### **DIRECTOR'S REPORT**

Steve Yundt is back in the Fisheries Bureau from his assignment at the Office of Species Conservation (OSC). The Department, Governor's office, and the OSC felt the assignment was a success, and the Department will be sharing a staff person in the future. Sharon Kiefer is joining the Department's Legislative team. The Director thanked Steve Barton for filling that position in the past.

The Governor's roadless initiative is proceeding, and the Governor has put Jim Caswell in charge of that process. The Department will be assisting Mr. Caswell with the project to provide information on wildlife and fisheries ramifications on new roads in currently roadless areas. That will take a lot of staff time over the next six months. The Governor wants proposals from counties and local governments by December so he can petition Washington, D.C., next spring.

The Department has sent letters to the Forest Service on landing helicopters in the wilderness. The Department has been working with wilderness managers at Forest Service to make sure the official applications are done the right way. Packages have been submitted, and the Department is still on schedule with wolf management plans.

The Director has been corresponding with Wyoming. They will meet 7-12/13, and the Commission is expected to approve the Governor's request for de-listing wolves in Wyoming. The Director does not feel that the US Fish and Wildlife Service will grant the request. Wolf management and de-listing will be a topic at the Tri-State meeting in August.

Commissioners Power, Watts, and Wright will be attending WAFWA. The Tri-State meeting is August 9-10 at Harriman State Park. Commissioners Gibbs, Wheeler, and Wright will attend. Commissioner Irby may try to attend. The Department will do a public notice of the meeting if there will be a quorum attending.

The Director and staff have been working constantly with GTECH. Over the July 4th weekend, the Department anticipated there might be problems and did have a backup plan in place. Vendors and officers were notified as to a procedure for issuing licenses.

### **MISCELLANEOUS**

#### **Commission Reports**

Magic Valley. Commissioner Wright reported that the new office was dedicated on July 6. Region 4 is sharing part of the building with Department of Lands. The wet spring has helped the reservoirs fill well

beyond initial expectations. The region has stocked all available waters and is having good lake and reservoir fishing. There may be carryover water in some systems, which is unusual the last few years. The region has had several sheep depredation by wolves in the Pine/Featherville area. Wildlife Services has been attempting to trap the wolves. The region has also been dealing with a coyote in the Hailey/Sun Valley area that bit three people. They had a hard time finding the animal but did finally shoot a coyote they think was the culprit. The wet spring also helped upland bird species such as sage and sharp-tailed grouse, and numbers should be up. Wind generation is a hot topic in the Region. Over 250 towers are proposed most of which are in critical sage grouse and mule deer habitat. The Cotterell and Brown's Bench projects could have a significant impact on wildlife, especially sage hens and migratory raptors and public access to the areas for hunting and recreation.

Salmon Region. Commissioner Power reported that the region has been focusing on its communication efforts. There has been an increase in activity to get radio and press coverage on a variety of topics to educate the public. Officers have been working on public relations efforts such as the hooked on fishing program. The Commissioner has been getting a lot of positive feedback, but it is difficult to get information out in the Salmon region. There has been a combined effort with other agencies and the private sector to get the boardwalk finished at the nature center. Kid's fishing fairs were held in Stanley, Challis, and Salmon with over 150 kids participating. The Commissioner continues to get calls about too many deer in town. He has also gotten a lot of comments on the vendor issue and GTECH. Need to have a backup system. Big issue is tour buses who come in with a group and it takes too much time to do them all. Kathy Cousins will give an update on the Moen Property activity.

Clearwater Region. Commissioner Irby reported that even though there were not many fish, the Region had a good salmon fishing season thanks to staff work to spread out the opportunity. The regional office is progressing and is very impressive. He thanked the Foundation and Department for providing new office buildings to the Regions. Potlatch continues to look for ways to provide public access and generate some revenue on their land. They are the largest private landowner in the state. They don't want to take away access, but it is becoming more difficult for them. The Governor's Pheasant Initiative efforts were reviewed by Representative Bert Stevenson and other Pheasant Forever Leaders. They were very complimentary of the program. Commissioner Irby met with the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation, the Forest Service, and Senator Crapo and staff regarding the Clearwater Elk Initiative, which is now coming together. The Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation is developing a major initiative for restoration and improvement of elk habitat in the Clearwater Region. Free fishing day was a success, and the Commissioner is hearing lots of compliments on Deer Creek Reservoir.

Southwest Region. Commissioner Watts discussed the growth in the region. He is working on the Hammer Flats development. This is a proposed housing development on land adjacent to a preserve near Lucky Peak. Councilman Fred Tilman invited the Department to be involved in discussions on the project. Regional staff is doing mountain lake surveys. They had a bumper crop of peregrine falcon chicks in downtown Boise. They also got a new hunter education trailer. The South Fork of the Salmon is still open. Enforcement has stepped up patrols at Swan Falls based on reports of sturgeon poaching, and there was a saturation patrol on the Snake River before July 4. The Department co-sponsored with Safari Club and the National Wild Turkey Federation a kid's day for children of military personnel. Over 200 kids participated. Commissioners Watts and Wheeler have been asked to participate with a group headed by The Nature Conservancy and former Chief Justice of the Idaho Supreme Court, Charles McDevitt. This ad-hoc group is working to create a fund in Idaho to buy easements for land. The group also includes the Idaho Cattle Association, the Henry's Fork Foundation, Simplot, Potlatch, and several others. Commissioner Watts continues to talk to people about WMAs, and the Commission needs to take up the issue and look at the mission of WMAs.

Upper Snake Region. Commissioner Wheeler reported that although the region started out the year thinking the water situation was dire, the reservoirs are now doing well. Will all the rain this spring, forage is also in good shape. The region is working on numerous projects including the Mule Deer Initiative. Staff has shown a lot of leadership on that project. The recent land acquisition of the Andrus property was a bargain

for the Department. Things are going well with Fish and Game, landowners and the public in the Region. The staff deserves a lot of credit.

Southeast Region. Chairman Gibbs reported that his region also benefited from lots of rain this spring. An additional 2-3 years of water has accrued in Bear Lake this year, and it has been a phenomenal year on the Bear River drainage. The region planted fish in Chesterfield Reservoir. The Regional Supervisor position is still open and there has been a second round of applications and interviews, but they are closer to having a new RS. The Joint Finance and Appropriations Committee (JFAC) was in the Region in mid-June, and the Department participated in part of that tour. Their discussions included the problems with GTECH, regional issues, and the budget. The Department continues to build relationship with legislators. There will be a new Mule Deer Initiative coordinator starting on July 18.

Panhandle Region. On behalf of Commissioner Hadley, Virgil Moore reported that the world's largest stream fertilization project is about to take place on the Kootenai River. The Department is putting phosphates back into the river to stimulate nutrients.

### Consent Calendar

05-43 Commissioner Watts moved and Commissioner Power seconded a motion **TO ADOPT THE CONSENT CALENDAR WHICH INCLUDES MINUTES FROM THE MAY 18-20 MEETING AND THE JUNE 13 CONFERENCE CALL.** The motion passed unanimously.

## REPORTS

### Waterfowl Management Update

Tom Hemker, Game Bird Program Coordinator, provided an update on waterfowl management and presented an overview of the federal framework for waterfowl management and how Idaho's seasons are set based on that framework (Appendix 38, Exhibit 66).

Migration data and harvest estimates are gathered across the continent. Idaho does about 3,000-4,000 bands each year to get data. Some of the bands are worth a reward to incentivize people to send them in. Habitat management efforts include federal wildlife refuges, state WMAs, private land, North American Wetland Conservation Act (NWCA), which is a federal grant program, and federal farm programs.

There are federal frameworks for the seasons the Department sets on waterfowl and migratory game birds. It takes seven months to prepare to set the seasons. The Commission takes action to set the seasons in August. September 1 is the earliest date allowed by treaty to hunt migratory game birds. Mr. Hemker provided an overview of each of the season frameworks for dove, crane, goose, and crows.

Adaptive Harvest Management (AHM) is the method by which the duck season is set. Data from Canada is put into a framework matrix. AHM is a complex data driven decision-making tool. By counting ponds and counting mallards, the matrix indicates what type of season there should be – liberal, moderate, or restrictive. Idaho's seasons are longer than other states. Based on the type of season, the framework indicates what the bag limits should be, and, again, Idaho's bag limits are more liberal. Overall liberal harvest rate is 13%, moderate is 11% and restrictive is 6%. It would require cutting the season in half and the bag limit to 2 to drive down the harvest to 6%.

Mr. Hemker provided an outlook for the 2005 season, which would be either a 107 or 86 day season, 7/2 or 5/2 bag framework, and a 107-day goose framework.

For the 2006/2007 season there is interest in creating a new duck framework. However, the process of negotiating a new framework is difficult with 49 states involved. One camp wants to have a less complicated framework that doesn't change much. Another camp wants to maximum opportunity.

As nongame programs increase, there is more interest in other wetland species. The Department is trying to make sure efforts between game and nongame are complementary.

The Commission discussed scoping questions, which need to include bag limits and the mix of drakes and hens as well as season length. Commissioners agreed that a random sample of known hunters would be the best survey method. They also agreed the seasons should be based on biological guidelines.

### **Landowner Appreciation Program Update**

Carl Rey, co-chair of the Fish and Game Advisory Committee provided an overview of the issues regarding changes to LAP and Access Yes! The Committee had to cancel its June meeting and was not able to prepare a white paper for the Commission. Their next meeting is scheduled for July 26 and 27 in Salmon.

Mr. Rey stated the four main complaints regarding the LAP program:

1. Small landowners (less than 640 acres) who don't qualify.
2. Large landowners (greater than 10,000 acres) who are beyond the ceiling that give them weight in the competitive drawing and don't feel they are being adequately appreciated.
3. Oversubscribed hunts where there are more applicants than tags available.
4. Inconsistency with 10% vs. 25% application in some units vs. others.

Mr. Rey provided background on why the Commission implemented the 10%-25% rule. He stated that the issue of small landowners who don't qualify is one the Committee acknowledged when LAP was implemented. LAP is not designed to address landowners with less than 640 acres or large landowners greater than 10,000 acres. The Committee knew a future component would need to be added or another program developed. The Committee believes the focus should be on modifying the Access Yes! program or developing a new program and that LAP should be left alone.

In looking at the four problems, the common denominator is not enough tags in the existing controlled hunt system to go around or to expand the allocation of tags for LAP with the exception of the difference between the 10% and 25% rule available to the Commission. LAP was carefully designed to be superimposed as an adjunct program on a controlled hunt system that had quotas based on biology with the intent of resource sustainability. Idaho's controlled hunt system was initiated and implemented primarily as a resource protection measure to sustain the resource. The Committee advises the Commission to be very careful not to undermine that premise. If the Commission wants to change LAP, maybe they should consider throwing out the controlled hunt system. Otherwise, the numbers available for allocation under LAP are what they are.

The Fish and Game Advisory Committee wants to act as an independent resource and express opinions even though they may conflict with other ideas and opinions. It will be important to assess public opinion on the question of how many tags sportsmen will feel comfortable having allocated to LAP and, conversely, what it will really take to provide incentive for landowners and whether those goals achievable.

Mr. Rey reiterated the Committee's basic message that LAP is all it can be and is what it was intended to be. The issues need to be addressed through other avenues. The Committee may seem to move slowly, but these are not easy issues and they are evaluating the details. They acknowledge that there is a problem with LAP but feel it should be a standalone issue.

Mr. Rey's closing comments were the following:

- The loss of LAP would guarantee a very undesirable backlash in the landowner community.
- The use of tags for incentive method of payment has merit and should be considered. However, the Committee urges caution in evaluating what the resource can sustain and urges proceeding very cautiously in gauging public sentiment.
- The Committee recognizes that this relatively new problem of landowners forming LLCs for LAP enrollment is the single biggest threat to the LAP program. The focus needs to be on this problem. Landowners splitting property for LAP eligibility is not acceptable from the perspective that there are

already not enough tags to go around. Marketing of tags and corporate eligibility under LAP need to be addressed.

Dr. Kent Marlor, co-chair of the Fish and Game Advisory Committee committed to the chair that they will have recommendations to the Commission by August 1. Dr. Marlor provided a handout on a conceptual program to Enhance Sportsmen's Access & Wildlife Habitat on Private Lands (Appendix 38 Exhibit 67).

Dr. Marlor stated that he is in complete concurrence on leaving LAP intact, but the issues do need to be addressed. The handout he provided is a model using tags as a form of compensation for providing access and improving habitat. It can be structured to fit both small and large landowners. However, while the Commission can go from 10% to 25% in allocating LAP tags, in small controlled hunts, that incremental 15% is not many.

The issue of selling tags is very difficult, and the Advisory Committee's advice is to scope the issue thoroughly. There isn't one member of the sportsmen's group on the Committee who would entertain the thought of the sale of tags.

One advantage to the program outlined in the handout is that tags can be used throughout the hunt area if they are used by immediate family. If they are used for anyone beyond the immediate family, they could be limited to land owned. There are details to work out, and the Committee needs input from staff. In addition to potential of tags, options for small landowners include the depredation program, purchase of crops and conservation easements.

Chairman Gibbs commented that there are times when the Commission is forced to make a decision without regard to public opinion. On some issues the Commission has to make the right decision based on the good of the state regardless of public sentiment.

Commissioner Wright asked about the statement to leave LAP alone since the Committee is proposing to take LAP tags and put them into Access Yes! Carl Rey explained that there are only 4 units in the state where the 25% rule is being implemented. It is 10% in almost every unit in the state, and the margin between 11% and 25% that is not being used if it were used under Access Yes! would not significantly impact LAP except for some unforeseen circumstance.

Commissioner Wright asked how landowners would feel if all the LAP tags were shifted to Access Yes! at some point. Mr. Rey cautioned that if LAP is taken away landowners would be unhappy and there would be a loss of goodwill in terms of PR and closure of many ranches that otherwise would have been open.

Dr. Marlor and Mr. Rey commented that the Committee agrees that sale of access is the landowner's business. However, allowing landowners to sell tags will require a statutory change that might not ever be approved. It may be better to sanction what is already happening, i.e. the sale of access.

Commissioner Wheeler commented that from the sportsmen's point of view, the issue is access, and selling trespass rights doesn't get sportsmen access. The Commission and Advisory Committee should find a way to enhance both benefit to landowners and sportsmen. A pilot program is the way to go about educating people. If a pilot program works, people have an example to look at and comment on.

Carl Rey cautioned about mixing the concepts of LAP, Access Yes! and depredation programs, in other words asking what sportsmen get from the sale of tags. LAP is the landowner appreciation program and is designed to provide landowners with recognition and appreciation for what they do for wildlife on their property. There are no strings attached. If they meet the criteria, they apply. Under Access Yes! tags are provided to provide access or habitat enhancement on a competitive basis so landowners are engaged with sportsmen and providing a quid pro quo for what they are receiving. Dr. Marlor stated that the Access Yes! program addresses sportsmen benefit, and the conceptual program he proposed would enhance sportsmen access and develop wildlife habitat.



Commissioner Irby broached the question of what to do with respect to large industrial lands. For large blocks of land, there are not enough funds in Access Yes! to go around. The Committee and Commission need to look at how to get money to pay these landowners. Potlatch wants to work with sportsmen, but other states are paying for the Access. Commissioner Irby disagrees with putting tags out for sale. That is not what corporate landowners want. They want money. Dr. Marlbor and Mr. Rey commented that the Advisory Committee understands the issue of recognizing large corporate landowners is significant. One way to approach the problem may be to create some special hunts and land management plans with large corporate landowners and let them sell access and generate income.

Commissioner Wheeler commented that the only thing of value the Department can use is wildlife. There is no way to come up with the kind of money it would take to incentivize some landowners. Recognition is nice and it will work, but looking long term to impact our heritage, will require looking at how many dollars it will take. The value of wildlife is the reason people are buying the ranches.

Commissioner Wright asked what other states do to show appreciation to landowners. Carl Rey commented that Arizona has a prominent education component, which Idaho does not.

05-44 Commissioner Wheeler moved and Commissioner Irby seconded a motion **TO FORM A TASK FORCE TO LOOK AT IDEAS, SET PARAMETERS AND INTEGRATE THOSE WITH THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE'S IDEAS THE FIRST PART OF AUGUST.** The motion carried unanimously.

The Commission agreed that all members of the Commission should participate on the task force. A discussion of LAP will be on the agenda for August 29 and 30.

Commissioner Power reminded the group that tags are an important part of this issue, but large corporate landowners are impacted by general hunts, so tag compensation will not work and there should be another method. Commissioner Wheeler suggested there may be a way for corporate landowners to get tags ahead of the general hunt. He encouraged creative thinking.

Commissioner Watts suggested getting the Advisory Committee's whitepaper and other groups' ideas by August 1. The Director will have staff do a news release and put an announcement on the website inviting people to send in thoughts on LAP. Commissioners talked about other incentive methods such as recognizing a landowner of the year. Commissioner Wheeler commented that if there are good ideas, the Commission shouldn't limit the discussion to things that don't require legislative actions.

## **RULES**

### **Release of Bighorn Sheep Tags for Auction/Lottery**

Director Huffaker presented staff recommendations to release bighorn sheep tags for auction and lottery. The Commission is authorized by Idaho Code to release one bighorn sheep tag for auction and one for lottery each year. Department proceeds from the auction tag are used to fund bighorn sheep research and management. Proceeds from the lottery tag help fund Department activities to resolve problems between wild and domestic animals. These tags have generated well over \$1 million for enhancement of bighorn sheep management (Appendix 38 Exhibit 68). The Foundation for North American Wild Sheep has been the conservation organization selected for marketing the tags.

Commissioner Wright asked about the exclusive arrangement with FNAWS to administer the auction and lottery. The Director explained that this specific program is provided for in Idaho code. The Commission can either authorize release of the tags or not. Commissioner Watts commented that there was a bill printed by the House of Representatives to provide Governor's tags that would rotate to various nonprofit groups. It was rejected by the Senate based on discriminating against certain organizations.

05-45 Commissioner Irby moved and Commissioner Wheeler seconded a motion **TO RELEASE THE BIGHORN SHEEP TAGS FOR AUCTION AND LOTTERY**. The motion carried unanimously.

### **Direction on Expenditure of Animal Damage Control Funds**

Jim Unsworth, Chief, Bureau of Wildlife, provided a draft of a letter to the Animal Damage Control Board (ADC) with direction on allocation of funds (Appendix 38, Exhibit 69). Every year the Commission decides how to distribute the funds sent to ADC. They do several things including handling lion and bear depredation on livestock. In the past, the Commission has allocated \$50,000 for ADC to distribute to the regions. A few years ago an additional \$50,000 was allocated to fund coyote control as part of a mule deer ecology study. Staff recommends continuing to allocate the additional \$50,000 to do coyote control and to direct those efforts on fawning range as part of the Mule Deer Initiative.

Commissioner Wheeler commented that information on predator control should go out to the public. It is a good example of the Department following through on what we said we would do. Commissioner Wright asked about the impact of SB1171 and whether there will be additional money in the future for predator control. Mr. Unsworth explained that there will be additional money, but it has not been determined how much will be directed to predator control.

05-46 Commissioner Watts moved and Commissioner Wright seconded **TO ACCEPT STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS ON USE AND DISTRIBUTION OF FUNDS ALLOCATED TO THE ANIMAL DAMAGE CONTROL BOARD**. The motion carried unanimously.

### **RECESS**

## **REPORTS**

### **Status of the South Fork Fishery**

The Director reported that the projected target for the fishery will have been reached by this weekend. The Department will let people fish through the weekend and close the South Fork at the close of fishing hours on Sunday.

### **OHV Outreach Campaign**

Barry Rose, Project Coordinator for the BLM, presented an overview of a public outreach proposal on off-highway vehicle (OHV) use (Appendix 38 Exhibit 70).

The campaign proposal is sponsored by the Idaho Interagency OHV Coordinating Committee -- a joint effort of the BLM, Fish and Game, Department of Lands, Forest Service, and the Idaho Department of Parks and Recreation.

The rapid growth in registered OHVs creates resource management issues and safety concerns for public land managers. These concerns are shared broadly by the Idaho public. Most people feel that ATVs should be allowed, but should be limited to designated trails on public lands. The OHV Outreach Project's purpose is to promote the responsible use of OHVs in Idaho. The plan is to phase in the messages over three years. Other states such as Arizona and Utah have similar campaigns.

Idaho's campaign was developed by advertising firm Elgin Syfert and Drake who identified the target audience of men 18-54 years of age with two subgroups -- hunters and hobbyists. Communications strategies include empower vs. command, use mass media to raise awareness, and provide more details through a website and support products. The media plan includes outdoor billboards, radio advertisements, and support

products (posters, decals, etc.). TV advertising was considered too expensive. If they get more funding, they will pursue that avenue.

Mr. Rose showed the Commission examples of billboards, posters and radio ads. Commissioners provided feedback on the examples. Commissioner Irby mentioned that “Tread Lightly” is being used in the Clearwater Region and is gaining some traction. He also commented that mud bogging and motorcycles are also causing problems and should be addressed. Commissioner Wheeler asked about the manufacturers’ involvement. Mr. Rose indicated they are not actively involved. The Blue Ribbon coalition has been somewhat involved. Commissioner Irby mentioned that it would be a good idea to collaborate with the statewide OHV association. Jim Unsworth suggested getting opinions from young people to see if the ads resonate with them.

Funding for the project has been provided by an Idaho Parks and Recreation grant, the BLM, and other agency partners. The campaign is scheduled to run from mid-September to mid-October to coincide with hunting season.

### **Scoping Questions for Bonus Point System**

Brad Compton, Big Game Manager, provided a draft of a public survey regarding bonus points (Appendix 38, Exhibit 71). The plan is to do a random survey of hunters, make the survey available on the web site, and hold public meetings in each region. Commissioners provided feedback on the questions and wording.

The intent is that the system be revenue neutral. The cost should go to those who receive the benefit. This would involve an increase in the non-refundable application fee. The increase will be in the \$2-\$4 range. Out-of-state applicants will also be required to purchase their license at the time of application, which is also non-refundable. There is \$400,000 budgeted in fiscal 2007 for a bonus point system. The Commission position has been that they would only be willing to implement a system if it were revenue neutral.

Commissioners will have another opportunity to look at the scoping survey before it is final. The timeline for public input is August through September, compiling results in October, and presenting a proposal to the Commission in November. The Commission will have a call to revisit the survey before August. The Director wanted to clarify that the Legislature will decide whether the application fee is appropriate or not. Implementation of a bonus point system does require legislation.

### **Mule Deer Initiative**

Jim Unsworth reported that there has been a great deal of progress this spring on habitat. Seasons are set, and the new coordinator will start later in July.

Commissioner Wheeler commented that there is a fundamental issue regarding what authority the Mule Deer Initiative coordinator has. The regions don’t want to give anything up, but there needs to be some way to ensure the coordinator is managed and presented as separate from the region and other biologists. There is a perception among rank and file Fish and Game employees and landowners that this is just a biologist for Region 5. They need to know that he is a decision-maker and someone who can make things happen. The Director commented that all those involved will need to come together and make it clear that the coordinator is the “go to guy” for the MDI.

### **Scoping – Potential Fishing Rule Changes**

Mark Gamblin, State Fisheries Manager, made the distinction between regulation proposals and the broader management issues. Programmatic, planning issues will be dealt with in six-year plan process, which begins next year.

Fred Partridge, Resident Fisheries Coordinator, presented an overview of public input regarding potential changes in fishing regulations and requested input from the Commission. Staff is proposing several statewide rule changes including removal of limits on walleye and northern pike except for designated waters being managed for these species, allowing harvest tournaments on wild trout where a conservation need has been identified, and changes to statewide steelhead rules (Appendix 38, Exhibit 72). The proposed changes will be scoped in the regions unless the Commission has concerns.

With respect to the regional exception items, following the public meeting and discussions with staff, the Department will scope a proposal to change walleye and perch limits in Salmon Falls Creek.

Commissioner Irby asked what measure are being taken to control the size of boats and commercialism on the Clearwater River. The Fisheries Bureau is working with Regional Staff and the Idaho Outfitters and Guides Licensing Board on this issue. Commissioner Irby offered his assistance.

Mr. Partridge clarified that the draft change to tournament rules would apply to fisheries where a conservation need has been identified. Commissioner Wright commented that he supports scoping the walleye and perch limits at Salmon Falls Creek. Commissioner Watts commented that there have been concerns about the number of tournaments on some bodies of water. Staff explained that is not a rule change at this point. Tournament rules are a separate rule-making issue. The Department can take action at any time on bass tournaments and will work with organized bass groups on the tournaments and discuss solutions.

Commissioner Irby asked about Deer Creek Reservoir being added as a family fishing water. He has been approached about why the Department is abandoning the reason for building Deer Creek, which was to provide a fishery with large fish. Some in the region are proposing what other states have done which is to put 12-17 inch fish back and keep fish on either side of that size range. The question is whether there is a need to have a place that will have a large fish consistently over time. Mr. Partridge indicated that the region can scope it both ways – either as a family fishing water or a trophy fishery.

Commissioner Wheeler asked about year-round fishing for rainbow trout on the South Fork of the Snake River and if the management goals are being met. Virgil Moore, Chief, Bureau of Fisheries, responded that the Department is beginning to achieve our goals on rainbow trout, but we are too early to measure the response to the various management measures being used. We could we cut back the season structure to be sensitive to other issues on the River and would have to look at the impacts. Opening boat ramps for easier access for commercial and public use is an option. Mr. Moore will discuss the issues and options with the Upper Snake Region.

Commissioner Irby has talked to anglers who are interested in turning 18 miles of Orofino Creek into a blue ribbon trout stream and would like to know what the procedure would be to pursue that option. Mark Gamblin indicated that idea could be addressed as part of the Fish Management Plan.

### **GTECH Report**

Dennis Jackson, account executive for Idaho, and Peter Lynch, Regional Vice President of GTECH, addressed the Commission regarding the recent problems with the point of sale system.

Mr. Lynch offered an apology on behalf of the Company and its Board of Directors for the unacceptably poor performance of the license system. GTECH believed the software errors that caused system problems on Memorial Day weekend in 2004 were fixed. Unfortunately, the system was not fixed, and it was not capable of processing the load on Memorial Day weekend 2005. Mr. Lynch stated that the system was not refusing transactions, it simply slowed everything down.

In reviewing the problem, GTECH identified a number of bottlenecks. Changes have been made, and they have worked with IBM, Microsoft, and their engineers on both hardware and software fixes to increase efficiencies. Updated software applications are being installed, and load testing shows the system capable of

three times the number of transactions logged at the system's peak. They have also implemented a ceiling on the number of transactions processed, at which point the system will refuse transactions and ask vendors to resubmit. The combination of all these changes will eliminate the issues. Mr. Lynch apologized again and assured the Commission that GTECH wants satisfied customers. GTECH will face liquidated damages in the event there are further problems. They are confident they have solved the problem and are willing to put a contractual obligation behind that. Mr. Lynch explained that under contract in the future, liquidated damages would be paid at a rate of \$5,000 per day after 4 hours of system downtime.

Mr. Lynch maintained that the system was not technically down over the Memorial Day weekend, but was taking 20-30 minutes for transaction turnaround. That is degraded system performance. GTECH is willing to look at the degraded performance and what damages might be reasonable. There are no metrics for damages in the current contract. Mr. Jackson will sit down with the Director to come to some agreement on the issue of damages. The Director commented that the Department does have a record of how the projections match end-of-year sales and can figure out how many licenses we were unable to sell this year. The other issue is the damage done to the Department's relationship with license vendors and how GTECH can help repair that relationship. Mr. Lynch was not prepared to promise anything at this point and was not in a position to talk about lost license revenue. He stated that at some point it becomes a legal issue and a matter of contractual interpretation.

Mr. Jackson explained that, unlike the Idaho Lottery network, the Fish and Game system runs on a single system with no redundancy and is also configured differently. It would be very expensive to reconfigure the network. Mr. Lynch urged the Department to address potential liquidated damages in the upcoming RFP process.

Commissioners asked if GTECH would bid in the RFP process. Mr. Lynch commented that GTECH has a tremendous investment in the system, and they will not recoup that investment in the remaining 18 months of the current contract. They look critically at all businesses to leverage transaction processing knowledge. For a business that processes a lower volume of transactions than a lottery system, it is a question of whether states will pay for a comparable level of performance.

Commissioners commented that the system was for all intents and purposes down over the Memorial Day weekend, and many would-be license buyers did not and probably will not get a license.

GTECH will attempt to quantify the loss, then look at the obligation that exists under the contract and consider a possible settlement. Commissioners expressed the hope that GTECH will come back with a good faith effort to rectify the problem. Mr. Lynch indicated that GTECH is anxious to satisfy the Commission.

### **Wolf Management Update**

Steve Nadeau, Large Carnivore Program Manager, provided an update on the Memorandum of Agreement with the US Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS), the Department's application to land helicopters in the wilderness, and progress of the ungulate research study.

The MOA with the Nez Perce Tribe was signed May 4. They are guaranteed funding and harvest. The MOA to gain designated agent status with FWS was sent to the Secretary of the Interior in March. The Office of Species Conservation has continued to try to contact the Interior Department to get that rolling, but Judge Manson was ill and nothing was moving forward. A few weeks ago OSC, FWS, the Tribe, and the Director reviewed the current status. The group discussed options and are now exploring the option of a cooperative agreement format similar to what Montana did. This could be done in a matter of a week or two.

The Director reiterated that there is no difference on the ground between an MOA and a cooperative agreement. Whichever is most expedient is desirable. The cooperative agreement requires more administrative reporting, but it may be the quickest way to get more management authority. Commissioner

Wheeler commented that we tried our best to go the maximum route as we promised the legislature, but we should move forward as we can.

Commissioners requested a copy of the MOA with the Tribe.

There is a proposal from FWS and the Secretary of the Interior to have involved states meet in Minneapolis to discuss some of the options available to de-list and down list.

The request to land helicopters in the wilderness went out to the Forest Service in June. The regional director thinks the wolf request has merit, but the ungulate research request may present issues.

Mr. Nadeau provided an update on wolf population status. Idaho has 26 reproductive packs and 84 pups verified statewide by mid-summer. There are still lots of wolves that have not been verified.

The Communications Bureau has sent out packets of information in particular detailing the new 10j rule. They have developed cards and tabloids that have been sent to regional offices and vendors. The Department of Agriculture and the Farm Bureau have been helping to get materials distributed.

Wolf and ungulate research data has been summarized as of July 5 and will be reviewed on July 12. The Department will have a presentation on the data and its implications for management actions at the August meeting.

### **Executive Session**

05-47 commissioner Watts moved and Commissioner Irby moved **TO HOLD AN EXECUTIVE SESSION, PURSUANT TO IDAHO CODE 67 2345(1)(C) PERTAINING TO LAND ACQUISITIONS.** The motion carried in a unanimous vote.

### **RECESS**

### **July 8, 2005**

Chairman Gibbs called the meeting to order at 8:04 a.m.

### **REPORTS**

#### **Regional Fisheries Update**

Sharon Kiefer, Anadromous Fish Manager, updated the Commission on the Pahsimeroi Chinook salmon run. Staff reassessed the numbers and now project a potential surplus of 300-900 fish. They have trapped 90% of the females needed for the broodstock goal of 540 fish. Using harvest sharing principals, the state harvest share should be in the range of 150-450 fish, probably toward the higher end of the range. The state has a permit from NOAA that allows incidental take of wild fish, and there is incidental take left for additional fishery opportunity. The Sawtooth run is going well, and any opportunity on the mainstem Salmon River will not jeopardize the Sawtooth run.

Staff's proposal for a summer Chinook salmon season on the Salmon River is for the fishery to open July 9 and close upon further notice on a 17 mile stretch of the Salmon River from Iron Creek Bridge to a posted boundary near the mouth of the Pahsimeroi River. The Department wants to keep the run upstream of the Lemhi River to minimize interception of wild fish. Fishing hours would be from one half hour before sunrise to 7:00 pm. This would be for adipose fin clipped Chinook salmon only with a one fish bag limit. It includes a mandatory check by 8:30 pm of the day of harvest. Monitoring plans include check stations and creel checks. The season will likely be relatively brief as the Department doesn't have a sense of fishing patterns

The last Chinook salmon season on the Salmon River was in 1978. This is an Idaho Power mitigation program and has been a priority for the Department. The Director commented that there is a possibility that NOAA may be pressured to pull the permit and there may be policy challenges.

05-48 Commissioner Power moved and Commissioner Irby seconded a motion **TO ACCEPT THE STAFF RECOMMENDATION TO OPEN A SALMON SEASON ON THE SALMON RIVER**. The motion carried unanimously.

## **RECESS FOR TRIP TO FISH TRAP**

### **Disability License Update**

Steve Barton updated the Commission on the discussions of the subcommittee assigned to look at disabled licenses and how the Department determines eligibility (Appendix 38 Exhibit 73).

The Committee's recommendation is to continue to use the SSI and SSDI definition under the philosophy that the disabled licenses are for those who are financially affected due to disability. There was discussion of how to name the license, e.g. "low income" disability license and how to make those licenses more easily available to the public. The Subcommittee is proposing that in the next request for proposals for the license system the Department include the condition that disabled licenses be coded or marked and allow individuals to get the license without re-certifying for a period of four years. On the fifth year, they would need to prove eligibility again. The Department can flag the renewal year in the system and send those individuals a renewal notice noting that they need to recertify.

The subcommittee felt no need to make any changes to the hunt from a motorized vehicle permit, which is good for five years. The Department will pursue issuing a vehicle tag for those who are permanently disabled with no recertification necessary. The Department license database could flag those individuals. No action is recommended on the handicapped archery permit for crossbow use. This applies to a very small number of individuals, and the Department has received no negative comments.

No legislative action is being suggested on any of the disability licenses.

The subcommittee also discussed the discounted deer, elk, bear, and turkey tags. They are currently ½ price for juniors, seniors, and disabled veterans. They are currently not available to those who qualify for a disabled license under SSI and SSDI determination. Making those available to that group would be a revenue loss of approximately \$35,000.

Commissioner Watts reminded the Commission that last year there was legislation introduced to change the definition of disability. The subcommittee's recommendation will not completely satisfy the concerns. There is a view that the disabled have a diminished experience and should get a discount. The subcommittee needs to follow up with disabled constituents and then go to the legislators involved. Commissioner Wright commented that the argument can be made that once deemed permanently disabled, people should be able to get the discount despite their financial situation. However, the Commission cannot come up with its own criteria for disability. Roger Fuhrman suggested that Kelly Buckland with the Independent Living Council could take the argument against discounts for disability to legislators.

The Director has contacted all of the national forests in Idaho to help the Department identify opportunities for the disabled to get behind gates. Every ranger district has a different set of rules, but we are doing all we can to increase the amount of roaded hunting opportunity for the disabled. The Department is also working on identifying all of the disabled access sites and opportunities on Fish and Game properties for the web site.

### **Hunting Opportunities for Returning Veterans**

The Director has been working with Idaho troops who are scheduled to be sent home in the December/January timeframe on what the Department can do to provide them with hunting opportunity since they will miss another hunting season.

The Department is recommending a change to the Commission rule that establishes the order in which people are placed on roles for depredation hunts. Currently, those interested must apply by June 30 for priority on the list. The change would allow returning military personnel to go to the front of the line upon return from deployment (Appendix 38 Exhibit 74).

Commissioner Watts suggested moving the wording on the selection process to subsection .03 of the rule.

05-49 Commissioner Irby moved and Commissioner Wright seconded **TO ACCEPT STAFF RECOMMENDATION GRANTING MILITARY PERSONNEL WHO ARE RETURNING FROM ACTIVE DUTY PRIORITY ON THEIR PREFERRED LIST FOR EMERGENCY DEPREDAATION HUNTS**. The motion carried in a unanimous vote.

The Director also suggested having a special military appreciation chukar hunt at the end of January.

### **Idaho Fish and Wildlife Foundation Wetland Banking Proposal**

Steve Barton provided an overview of a wetland mitigation project the Idaho Fish and Wildlife Foundation (IFWF) has been working on for some time (Appendix 38 Exhibit 75). This is a joint effort with the US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) and the Idaho Transportation Department (ITD). The project is an in lieu fee program whereby the Transportation Department would pay into a trust fund based on a fee schedule set up by region. Funds would build up until there was an amount large enough for a significant project. The Department would then receive funding for an on- the-ground mitigation project. This leverages the unique partnership between IFWF and the Department with the Foundation acting as the banker and investment fund. The proposal includes asking the Transportation Department to make a one-time \$750,000 payment for a demonstration project to help test the fee schedule and gauge what it will take to acquire and develop a wetland project and set up the trust fund.

05-50 Commissioner Power moved and Commissioner Watts seconded a motion **TO ACCEPT STAFF RECOMMENDATION AND PURSUE AN AGREEMENT FOR AN IN LIEU FEE PROGRAM WITH USACE AND ITD**. The Motion carried unanimously.

### **FY '07 Budget Status Review**

Jim Lau, Chief, Bureau of Administration provided an overview of the budget process for Fiscal Year 2007 (Appendix 38, Exhibit 76).

Budget discussions will be held with bureaus on July 18, and the Director will review the requests. The preliminary fiscal '07 budget is flat for expenditures. Mr. Lau pointed out that fiscal year 2006 has an extra pay period that added approximately \$1.4 million to expenses. In 2007, there is a \$1 million request for a license system solution, which the Division of Financial Management (DFM) and the Legislative Services Office (LSO) indicated was an appropriate request. Also in fiscal '07 is a \$400,000 line item for implementing the bonus points system.

Mr. Lau pointed out that near the end of fiscal year '05 the Department focused on minimizing reversions. There was significant spending at year end. In addition, the Department had to fund the extra pay period which was July 1, 2005, out of the fiscal '05 budget. That necessitated moving \$1 million from the budget stabilization account into operations. That \$1 million will be replaced with a transfer from the fleet management account.



Commissioner Watts asked about revenue numbers which show an increase and how that would affect our position with GTECH regarding loss of revenue due to the system problems. Mr. Lau explained that they will be looking specifically at Memorial Day weekend revenue numbers and trends. Commissioner Wright commented that license sales are still trending down even though fiscal year '05 sales were very strong. Mr. Lau explained that some price resistance is factored in, and they are anticipating a 2-3% overall unit decline. Commissioner Wheeler volunteered to schedule a meeting with Dean Cameron regarding the budget. Commissioner Irby suggested the Department do more marketing if unit sales are expected to decline.

The Department is working on several projects. Roger Fuhrman, Chief, Bureau of Communications, reported on the results of the Department's purchase of Wyoming's list of unsuccessful controlled hunt applicants. The Department purchased the names of 2,000 controlled elk hunt applicants, and sent out a postcard which resulted in significant traffic on a special web site and \$15,000 in sales. Other lists may be available as well. The Department will be promoting the Hunt Planner and has talked to *Outdoor Life* and *Field and Stream* about a feature article on the Hunt Planner.

The fiscal year 2007 budget is due to the Governor's office on September 1. Mr. Lau is working with DFM and LSO on the format of the budget, which will be in two versions – the very complex automated version electronically transmitted to DFM and an abbreviated version. Staff will keep the Commission updated on the budget process.

### **Legislative Proposals**

Steve Barton and Sharon Kiefer presented the preliminary items that the Department may wish to sponsor during the next legislative session. The Department needs to provide a list of placeholders or one-sentence items to DFM and the Governor's office by August 1 (Appendix 38 Exhibit 77).

The first proposal is to consolidate non-resident youth licenses. Commissioners discussed the broader topic of consolidating and simplifying all licenses. Staff has put together a draft based on consolidating as compactly as possible and keeping changes revenue neutral (Appendix 38, Exhibit 78). Since consolidation of licenses will require legislative approval if it affects fee structure, Commissioners discussed meeting with the JFAC co-chairs to discuss the concept and get their input.

05-51 Commissioner Wheeler moved and Commissioner Power seconded a motion **TO CREATE A SUBCOMMITTEE TO WORK WITH LEGISLATORS ON SIMPLIFYING THE LICENSE STRUCTURE**. The motion carried in a unanimous vote.

Commissioners Watts, Power, and Wheeler volunteered to serve on the subcommittee. Representatives Wood and Stevenson and Senators Cameron and Schroeder should be included. Commissioners agreed that the first proposal as submitted to the Governor's office would be a broad item on consolidation of licenses.

The second proposal to convert the institutional inmate fishing permit to a facility permit would allow the state schools and hospitals to use one permit and simply provide a list of those on a fishing trip rather than requiring each individual to have a permit. Commissioner Watts asked that the nomenclature of institutional inmate be changed to resident or something other than inmate. This would involve a change in Code.

The third proposal is to coordinate with the Department of Agriculture on importation and possession of captive wildlife legislation. This was an item that Senator Schroeder asked the Department to address.

Staff ideas will also be included on the list provided to DFM and the Governor's office. The Department does not need to provide detail on the proposals at this time. Strike and underline is not due until October 1. Staff will also include a placeholder for disabled license legislation in the event that legislators want to pursue that avenue.

Mr. Barton reported that Ray Houston with LSO indicated there were some technical errors in SB1171. Commission consensus was not to address the bill again at this time and let the Department of Agriculture address the issue if necessary.

Commissioner Wheeler brought up the need for the Commission to have a procedure for getting information on legislative issues, discussing the issues, and defining a position. The Commission needs a unified message in order to have any influence. Suggestions included a strategy session in November and weekly conference calls. Commissioners also need to know what the sportsmen's groups are doing and supporting. Commissioners agreed they should not comment before talking and coming to consensus on a position.

When legislation comes up, staff will develop an analysis sheet to be sent to Commissioners ahead of the conference call. This should be a one-page backgrounder, including pros and cons, impacts, and staff recommendation. Commissioners need to know who the sponsors are and who is supporting the legislation along with phone numbers for those contacts. The Commission needs to take an up, down, or neutral position. A discussion of this procedure will be an agenda item for the August meeting.

Commissioner Wheeler will set up a meeting with the co-chairs of JFAC and germane committee chairs in Jerome as soon as possible. Any Commissioners who wish to attend are welcome.

The Director reported that Terry Mansfield has developed a good working relationship with the domestic cervid ranchers and will try to reach a point where we can support what they do if they will support not trying to expand to include other cervids.

## **July 8, 2005**

### **Landowner Appreciation Program**

Commissioners asked staff to create a summary of ideas/options for changing the LAP program. Other groups will be invited to propose ideas. Commissioner Wright would like to have Region 4 and Steve Elam put together a pilot project for Unit 45.

Commissioner Gibbs commented that not many landowners ask for antlerless tags, so perhaps having antlered and antlerless tags would help. The Commissioner will look at depredation and see if that might solve some problems. They will also consider other ways to show appreciation, such as letters, awards, etc. The Commission will take up the discussion at noon on August 29 for half a day.

### **Salary Adjustment**

05-52 Commissioner Watts moved and Commissioner Wheeler seconded **TO RECOMMEND TO THE GOVERNOR AN 8 % PAY INCREASE FOR DIRECTOR HUFFAKER, EFFECTIVE JULY 3, 2005.** The motion carried unanimously.

Commissioner Wright asked for a substitute for the August 19 Idaho Fish and Wildlife meeting in Lewiston. Commissioner Irby volunteered to attend.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:55 pm.